



TN Human Rights Commission

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For Immediate Release

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Patricia Pierce Appointed to the TN Human Rights Board of Commissioners



(Nashville, TN - July 2008) Patricia Pierce a well-known name in middle Tennessee for her service to the community and activism for Human Rights returns to the Commission.

On July 11, 2008, Governor Bredesen announced Pierce's appointment to serve a six-year term on the TN Human Rights Board of Commissioners representing the Eastern division of the state. Prior to this appointment Pierce served as a board member in middle Tennessee.

Pierce who last year retired from Vanderbilt University relocated to her East Tennessee hometown, Harriman after 29 years of administrative service to the University.

As Director of Vanderbilt's Opportunity Development Center (ODC), Pierce was responsible for all University and Medical Center matters related to equal opportunity and affirmative action laws, regulations, and guidelines. She monitored the University's compliance with equal opportunity and affirmative action laws, conducted workshops on a variety of topics related to equity and diversity, and served as the initial contact person for employees, faculty, staff, and students who have grievances that included allegations of unlawful discrimination and/or sexual harassment. Pierce served as a fact finder and mediator of University grievances and sought to resolve them. She was also the University's Title VI, Title IX, and ADA coordinator. Prior to her service at Vanderbilt University, she worked as Compliance Director for the TN Human Rights Commission.

"I am looking forward to working with Patricia again. She has a long history with the Commission, we are indeed privileged to have someone of her abilities, and qualifications serve the citizens of Tennessee for another term," said Spencer Wiggins Chairman of the Board.

Pierce served on several community boards including the Governors Advisory Committee on Fair Employment Opportunity, YWCA, and the League for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. She has served as a member of the YWCA National Affairs Committee; past Co-Chair and committee member of Nashville's ATHENA Awards Program; Board member for Women's Political Caucus; Chair of the Human Needs Committee for the League of Women Voters; and Board member of the Nashville Sports Council.

Pierce has held the position of President and Conference Chair of an international group, the Association on Higher Education and Disability; is Past President and Historian of a local professional organization for women, CABLE; Past President of the Nashville & Middle Tennessee YWCA, Past President for Women in Higher Education in Tennessee (WHET), Past State Facilitator of the American Council on Education-Tennessee Network, and Past President of Women in Numbers (WIN). She is currently serving on the Board of Directors for the International ATHENA Foundation. She was a delegate to the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, a participant in the 2002 Oxford Round Table at Oxford University in England, a 2000 graduate of Leadership America, and a 2004 graduate of Leadership Nashville.

Pierce is the recipient of numerous awards for her advocacy for women's rights. She received the *Mary Jane Werthan Award* for extraordinary contributions to the advancement of women at Vanderbilt; the *Promote Women Award* from CABLE and the *Jean Harris Rotary International Award* for promoting opportunities for women. Pierce was a 2002 inductee to the YWCA *Academy of Women of Achievement* and is Nashville's 2003 ATHENA recipient. She is listed in the following biographical publications: *2000 Notable American Women*, *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who of American Women* and is one of Tennessee State University's 2008 Women of Legend and Merit Award recipients.

Pierce is married to Jacky Goss of Harriman and is the daughter of Fred Pierce and the late Lela Pierce.

The Commission is an independent state agency charged with eradicating discrimination and protecting the civil rights of all individuals within the state in the areas of housing, employment and public accommodations. If you've been discriminated against or would like more information about your civil rights please call us at 615.741.5825 or visit our informational website at www.tn.gov/humanrights.

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